Greenfield, Kilsobbin, Co. Dublin
August 23. 1859

Dear Mr May – I did not read the Reports by C.C. Burleigh until within the last few days when I took them up stubbornly and read from beginning to end. I them remarkably able documents – clear, calm, historically true, full of the sentiment of the subject, well written in good English, masterly in their exposition of details – and desperately discouraging. So vast is the evil – so terribly saturated are the American people with it, with its virus, and so inevitably made on the means & so infinitely small ~~as~~ is the instrumentality by which it is to be withstood. It is just glorious that at this time there should be a want of harmony amongst the little band in whom, humanly speaking, the cause of the slave depends. What in us, any of us, any of you, that we should allow little personal feelings to mark the sublime mission with which those who are honoured to take part to make a part in this work. Fate seems to me to show a wonderful of tact and magnanimity that he cannot defer to the judgment of fellow labourers who have all along shown ~~[illegible]~~ that they are free from self seeking & are thoroughly devoted to the cause. Mr. F. is a signal proof that even a very noble & heroic woman cannot keep straight when subjected to the influence of a husband whom she loves & respects.

I think I know Pillsbury very well — his extreme touchiness, sensitiveness, the lofty standard by which he judges of others, and the high scale of anti-slavery consistency & fidelity which he requires. It appears to me that in such a struggle, with such surroundings, & so many adverse influences — as in the ordinary affairs of life — the wisest course would be to take people as you find them, and not to be quarreling with people for not being as good as yourself or as you would wish them to be. I could freely state my views of the shortcomings of Republicans & churchmen, Seddings & Cheevers & Beechers — but I could not put the screws upon my fellow laborers for refusing to swear to my shibboleths respecting these men. It then cut enough to trouble us without falling out with our best friends. I would rather make the best of all the help I could get, than quarrel with some of my comrades because they declined to condemn others of the members with sufficient vehemence. It goes back to the beggarly elements from which the American Anti-Slavery Society appeared to be more free than any other association of which I have any knowledge. I am glad Wendell Phillips had the offer of assuaging Pillsbury. I confess it was not very clear to me. I thought it far less need than his speeches. I think he employed a great many words to enforce what

might have been stand much more successfully. In consenting to give up the word encomiums applied to Cheeves & others, Pillsbury conceded what was most objectionable in his position. When people come to help you out of a difficulty — as to and you in abolishing slavery, they spend your time measuring the degrees of centuries you have to bestow in their deficiencies. Slavery is so gigantic an evil — so horrible in its corrupting influences upon the people subjected to its powers, that it is incumbent on its opponents to be magnanimous & forbearing to one another, in order to make the most of one another, and in the battle with the common enemy. Now who stand at the helm of the Anti Slavery Vessel have a task of unusual difficulty & anxiety, first the lead bad of it in having to contend with the faulty & peculiarity of men of their compeers who have shown that they possess many good & able qualities.

It is right to acknowledge the help that Cheeves & Beecher can give. It is right to state their shortcomings in the clearest terms but it is not right for Pillsbury & Foster to make it a point that their friends & fellow labourers shall be as intolerant as they think it right to be themselves.

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4) As to this lamentable account of Miss Esther's Liberator & Mrs Tuber & Mrs Stephens Standard I really can give no further explanation. I send you a Bank Pay Bill on the Bank of England for £12.15.1 which & with my own statement I hope will be found satisfactory. By it (which you draw up from your lists) it seems that Miss E. has paid for her Standard & Lib. for 1859 – & the other two ladies for the Standard for 1859. To what further explanation is required I cant imagine. If there is still any other subscription of Miss Esther's wanting I would greatly prefer having it charged to me than to have to ask her for it or account for it myself. I have done my best both as to time & pains to make things straight. To the best of my belief all the Standard subs. are paid up to the end of 1859 except a few to whom I could not get access. Both times I made it a matter of second personal request in order that I might send forward a complete statement for the year. My son suggests that in future the receipts for the Lib. stating the time for which the papers have been subscribed should be sent to me leaving it to me to fill in the dates – for instance say £1 – some 15/ – some 11/8 – some 12/6 a year & from all I get as much as I can. With these receipts in hand I would ask for the money & would return such as I failed to get payment for. The same might be done with the Standard.

My son Richard sailed from Sydney for San Francisco about the 10th of April. Allowing him till the end of June for the voyage it is now 8 weeks since he arrived in California & we should have heard long ago. I am beginning to feel anxious about him. The captain did not

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intend to call at any of the South Sea Islands, which Richard greatly wished to visit. But he may have been obliged to do so — and this may account for the delay. What he will do in San Francisco or how long he may stay nobody knows. But if he reaches Boston he will surely call at 24 Cornhill & a letter will be more likely to reach him there than elsewhere. I have desired his mother who is now writing to him to that address, to be sure to enquire for you & to see you if he can. He is quiet, steady, & unassuming — but a very good fellow, & perfectly steady & strict writing.

The Am. Lect. Reports are nearly exhausted. I circulated them carefully — but would be able to make good use of as many more if I had them.

I heard that the real reason of Mr Remond not being allowed or (should say invited to speak at the London Ist of August meeting was Lord Brougham's saying he could not take the chair if ~~he~~ she did so. I suppose from the old abolitionism on account of British influence. This last fact Lord Brougham, was the ground that Thompson put the abolition on. I suppose Brougham disliked the Am. Lect. Society for Thompson made no reference to them in his speech in Brougham's presence. Washington Irving at Chapman & Hall's dinner paid them a handsome compliment after Brougham had left the chair. America Irving behaved very shabbily. One of the meanest things on earth is an apostate American abolitionist.

The associate with the Rev Lord Brougham visited Miss Reynard & sat an hour talking with her. I heard today that he was very much pleased with her. I have also heard that Miss R. has been offered her assistance without payment of fees to aid the classes at the Ladies College, Bedford Square, under the patronage of Mrs Reid & that she means to avail herself of the opportunity — & a very good opportunity it would prove to such a very gifted woman as she is. I hope she may be able to make use of it. She had quite a scene with George Thompson about the public meeting — but I heard that he fell very much the awkward-ness of his position. He would be a very fine fellow if he always had gentlemen or ladies by his side — and his heart is in the right place. I wish he were half as stable & as prudent as he is brilliant. I see an account of the Oberlin Wellington Rescue case published by Smith for 50 cents. I would like to have a copy.

I am glad to hear such a favorable account of your son and hope he may safely run the gauntlet of these unhealthy islands, which are I suppose more favorable to American than to English constitutions.

Do Brodstone with tell you he has seen my family in our new country house.

I am your affectionately

Richard Webb

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